




# SPORTS AS PROPAGANDA

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# OBJECTIVES

1. Identify potential benefits and risks for nations that attempt to utilize sports competition to achieve domestic and/or international political objectives.
  2. Analyze specific historic and current examples of state sponsored sports propaganda efforts.
  3. Consider what degree it is possible to separate sports competition from politics.
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# NAZI GERMANY

I. Strength through Joy

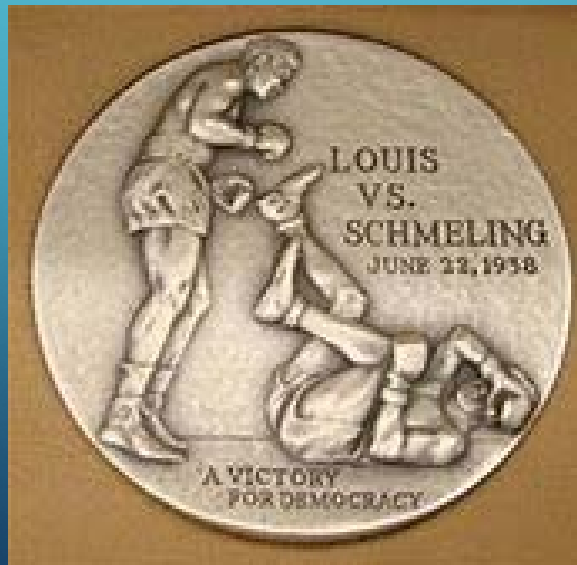
II. Hitler Youth

III. Olympics

A. Berlin

B. Garmisch

IV. Schmeling vs. Louis





# USSR

I. Stalin rejected “capitalist” competition until 1952.

II. Khrushchev Era “We will bury you”

A. 5 year sports plan

1. Mass Movement

2. Elite Athletics

B. Results: “The Big Red Machine”

1. Sports Science/Steroids

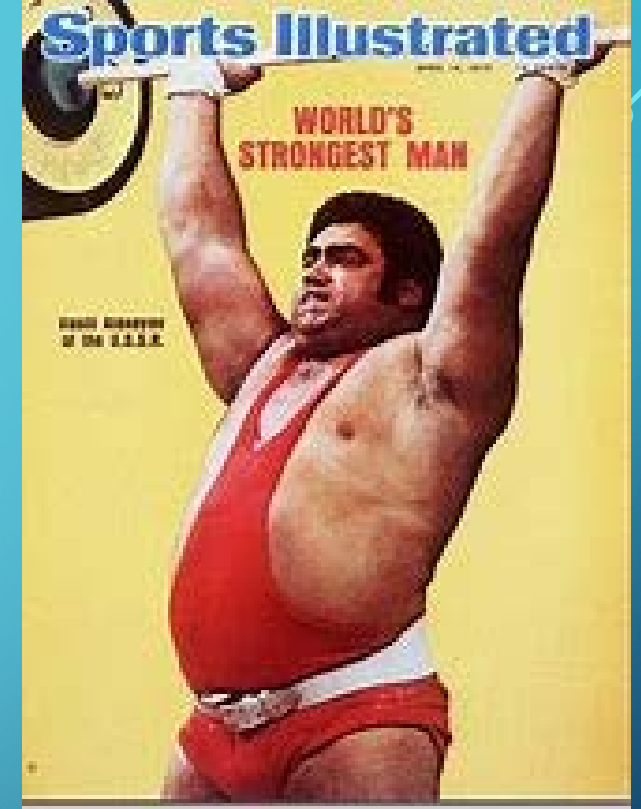
2. Peak Year 1972

3. 1952-92 Results



# MASTER OF SPORT

- A. Junior Rankings
- B. Candidate Master
- C. Full Master
- D. International Master
- E. Master for Life



# EAST GERMANY

## I. Why East Germany more than other Eastern Bloc nations?

- A. NAZI Legacy
- B. Manufacturing Base
- C. Chemical Industry

## II. Spartacus Games

## III. Elite Athletes



# ATHLETIC SCREENING

- A. Sport schools
- B. Coaching Ratios
- C. Anabolic Steroids
- D. STASI
- E. Financial Rewards

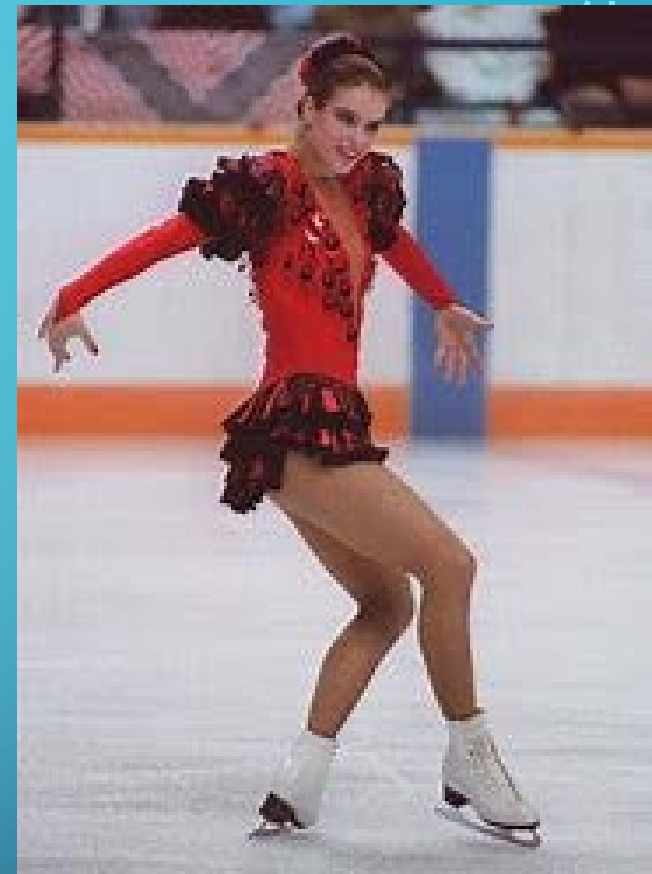




# RESULTS 1968-92

A. Medals

B. Long-Term Health





# RUSSIAN SPORT PROGRAM (1992-PRESENT)

- I. Steroids Program never stopped

## II. Sochi 2014

A. Lobbying for games

B. Propaganda Objectives

C. Operation Positive Results Sochi

1. PED

2. Anti-doping campaign

D. Political Results

1. Public Opinion

2. Crimean Invasion



# CURRENT EVENTS

- I. Trump vs. NFL
- II. Russians in South Korea
- III. Korean Détente
- IV. 2018 World Cup
- V. China
- VI. Cuba



## Sports as Propaganda Notes

Slide 1 – Modern Olympics established in 1896 with goal of promoting a peaceful and better world through international sports competition. Olympic spirit of mutual understanding stressed. However, this was an age of intense nationalistic and imperialistic competition between major powers. Many nations viewed sports competition as an opportunity to emphasize physical exercise to prepare soldiers for combat. In addition, sports were seen as a tool to promote racial and ethnic superiority. Also the age of rapid growth of mass spectator sports (horse racing, boxing, World Cup soccer, American baseball...) Nations took pride in construction of modern sporting facilities. At the same time, mass communications (newspapers, magazines, film, and eventually radio) could be utilized to promote sporting competitions and turn champions into celebrities.

Photo – During the Cold War, international sports competition continued to be an extension of political competition. US Olympic Hockey Gold Medal (1980) known as the “Miracle on Ice”

### Slide 2 – Objectives

Slide 3 – The National Socialist German Workers Party (NAZI) sought to establish a totalitarian fascist state where all citizens were members of organizations that placed the goals of Germany above individual goals. The Strength Through Joy program emphasized outdoor activity and physical fitness for all Germans as a means of preparing citizens to sacrifice for the common good, while experiencing the euphoria of intense national pride. The long term goal was for the Germanic people to dominate Europe as a result of their racial superiority. The NAZIS started with children, organizing the Hitler Youth as a mass movement that personally pledged their allegiance to Adolf Hitler and the fatherland. Fitness programs were designed to create future soldiers. Hitler saw the 1936 Olympics (Germany hosted both the Summer Games in Berlin and the Winter Games in Garmisch) as a vehicle to promote German superiority. Jewish athletes were discouraged from competing (such as US sprinter Marty Glickman), however African American Jesse Owens won 4 Gold medals in Berlin angered Hitler and caused a propaganda crisis for the NAZIS. Although German heavyweight boxer, Max Schmeling defeated African American Joe Louis in a 1936 bout, Louis met with President Roosevelt before the 1938 rematch, which resulted in a 1<sup>st</sup> Round Louis knockout

Photos - Hitler at Berlin's Olympic Stadium (1936). Medallion commemorating Louis's knockout of Schmeling (1938).



Slide 4 –After rejecting international athletic competitions as capitalist spectacles for over 30 years, Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin permitted entry into the 1952 Olympics. For decades, the USSR had been utilizing mass sporting spectacles as communist party rallying events that encouraged physical fitness to build the workers state and prepare for defense of the homeland against capitalist invasion. Additionally, the communist party saw sports as a method to integrate the multi-ethnic nation. After Stalin's death, Nikita Khrushchev developed a 5 Year plan for athletics with both mass participation events to be filmed for propaganda purposes and the development of an elite athletic training program. Khrushchev promised to win the competition with the West through cultural, economic and political means.

"The Big Red Machine" (Soviet Olympic team) used sports science (both nutrition and steroid use) to create an internationally dominant sports program. By 1972, the Soviet Summer Olympic team won 99 medals (50 gold) placing 1<sup>st</sup> among medal winning nations and even upsetting the US in basketball. International politics interfered with international competition in 1980 when the US boycotted the Moscow Olympics over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The Soviets responded by boycotting the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.

Photos – Soviet propaganda poster emphasizing physical fitness to build a workers paradise. Khrushchev threatening the West with competition in all areas of human activity to demonstrate the superiority of the communist system.

Slide 5 – The Soviet elite athletic development program eventually led to a very structured development program where athletes were identified and selected by the age of 10. Teenagers attended special sports schools where they were designated with Junior Rankings. Those who progressed in their sport were identified as Candidate Masters as young adults and then as Full Masters as adults. Those who qualified for international competition (International Masters) earned significant privileges for themselves and their families, but also were closely watched by the KGB. Olympic champions who brought glory to the nation were designated Master's for Life and usually became coaches or cultural ambassadors and joined the elite of Soviet society.

Photos - Super Heavyweight Power Lifter Vasily Alexeev won two Olympic Gold Medals (1972 & 1976) and set over 80 world records earning the Master for Life title. Olympic gymnast Ludmilla Tourischiva was a 9 time medalist (1968-76) and married another Master for Life, 2 time Olympic Gold Medal sprinter Valeriy Borzov.

Slide 6 – Although all Soviet Bloc Eastern European nations followed the Soviet Union in developing elite athletic programs for international competition, the East German system surpassed all others. Some factors contributing to the unparalleled success of the East Germans included the legacy of the pre-World War II NAZI sports program, the most productive manufacturing infrastructure in the Soviet Bloc, and a long standing world class chemical

industry that aided in the development of sophisticated steroids that were both highly effective and difficult to detect. Although very small (a population of less than 20 million), the East German government was fully dedicated to athletic success. Sports screening began at kindergarten and special sports schools were established even at the elementary grade levels. Mass athletic spectacles such as the annual Spartacus Games in Leipzig attempted to connect the entire population to the goal of producing sporting champions.

Photo – The intensely driven East German delegation enters the stadium to demonstrate to the world the superiority of the communist system.

Slide 7 - East German sporting programs were directly supervised by the Ministry of Education. All schools had a centralized and highly emphasized physical education curriculum. The sports schools expanded to over 10,000 students where athletic practice (8-10 hours/day) greatly overshadowed academics. Coaching ratios were generally 3:1, but 2:1 in important programs like swimming and gymnastics. State Plan 14.25 instituted in 1974 placed athletes on a mandatory sophisticated nutritional plan that was coupled with anabolic steroids. The East German government spent as much money on performance enhancing drugs (PED), as it devoted to the teacher training program for the entire nation (some estimates suggested the East Germans dedicated nearly 1 Million Deutsch Marks to winning each Olympic Gold medal). The Ministry of Education operated the “doping” program in cooperation with the STASI (state secret police) to ensure secrecy and prevent athletes from defecting at international competitions.

Photos – Anabolic steroids. STASI file storage in East Berlin gathered through a vast network of informants that included family members, coworkers, friends and neighbors.

Slide 8 – The East German sports program surpassed the Soviet Big Red Machine by many measures. During the peak years of 1968 to 1988, the East Germans won 409 medals (153 gold) in the Summer Olympics and 110 in the Winter Olympics (39 gold). After reunification in 1990, the combined German team was approximately half East German although the east was only ¼ of the population. In 1992, the combined German team finished 3<sup>rd</sup> over in medal count (82 medals, 33 gold) in the Summer Games, while taking 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Winter Olympics (26 medals, 10 gold). Unfortunately, the forced steroid program had devastating long term health consequences for the female athletes including infertility, excessive hair growth, breast cancer, heart problems and birth defects in children (in fact girls were forced to take the pill at age 12 in order to prevent birth defects that would have damaged the morale of the athletes). Both gender athletes also suffered from liver damage and aggression issues.

Photos – Katarina Witt a 2 time Olympic Gold Medalist in figure skating (1984 & 1988), who also won 4 world championships. Olympic shot putter Heidi Krieger who was so changed by the

forced steroid program, that she eventually decided to undergo gender reassignment surgery, becoming Andreas Krieger.

Slide 9 – After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, governmental funding of Russian and East German sports programs shrunk dramatically. However, corporate support for high profile International champions quickly followed. German athletic apparel giant, Adidas and Russian vodka distiller, Smirnoff were the most prominent companies to sponsor former Soviet Bloc athletes. Because of the influx of corporate money, the Russian steroid program never stopped entirely. After winning the competition to host the 2014 Winter Games (Sochi), the Russian government mandated “Operation Positive Results Sochi” headed by Grigory Rodchekov. An extensive performance enhancing drug (PED) program was coupled with a sophisticated “anti-doping” campaign to utilize high tech espionage and chemical tampering to prevent International Olympic committee (IOC) detection of steroids. False rooms were constructed next to IOC laboratories and Russian technicians developed methods of opening sealed urine samples and resealing them without detection. When Rodchenkov revealed the secret program in 2015, the IOC inspected all Russian samples and confirmed that 100% of the athlete’s samples had been tampered with. The program was known to President Vladimir Putin and was intended to improve domestic public opinion of the Russian government as well as increase the prestige and respect for the nation internationally. In fact, Putin’s public opinion rating rose from in the 40% range before the Olympics, to over 90% afterward. This support encouraged Putin in his move to quickly seize the Crimean peninsula from the Ukraine shortly after the Winter Games. Eventually, the IOC prevented the Russian National team from competing at the 2018 Winter Games in South Korea. Instead, individual athletes competed under the Olympic Athletes from Russia (OAR) banner.

Photo - President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Medvedev intended to demonstrate that Russia was back as a great power through a dominant sporting performance combined with a grandiose show of cultural and economic superiority at Sochi.

Slide 10 - Throughout the world, athletic competitions continue to draw intense interest through mass media coverage and both athletes and leaders continue to attempt to use them for economic and political gain. From the rapprochement between North and South Korea since the 2018 Winter Games, to the Russian hosting of the 2018 World Cup of Soccer, high profile sports continue to be used for propaganda purposes that often are at odds with the humanitarian goals established as the underpinning of international athletic competition.

Graphic – Logo for the soccer World Cup held in Russia (June 14-July 15, 2018)